

Grange/ Prestonfield Community Council
Minutes of meeting 19 February 2025

Meeting held in person at Prestonfield Community Centre and via Zoom

Office Bearers -

Chair - Ian Chisholm; Joint Vice Chairs - Paul Rowllings, Ellen-Raissa Jackson;
Secretary- Raphael Bleakley; Treasurer - Paul Rowllings;

Members present:

Ken Robertson, Stanley Bird, Sue Tritton; Ian Wright; Cllr Steve Burgess, Bill Reid

Members present on Zoom:

Sally Griffiths, Peter Jones, Ellen-Raissa Jackson, Paul Rowllings, Andreas Grothey.

Members of the public in-person

Claire Danon

Members of the public on Zoom

Antonia Georgieva, Denise Fisher

Apologies: Alan Gilmour

1. **Welcome.** – Ian Chisholm welcomed members to the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest** – None

3. Minutes of 22 January 2024

- Date to be changed at the heading on the first page. Minutes otherwise agreed as accurate.

Actions:

- **Planning vacancy** – Continued to after the CC elections.
- **Newington Cemetery wall** – Still need to finish the top fencing on the wall, but nearly there.
- **CCTV cameras in the GPCC area** – No further update from Tim
- **Traffic Restrictions on Waiting, Loading & Unloading** – Cllr Pogson confirmed to Sally that this is a re-advertisement of arrangements that have been in place since 2022 – confirmed nothing new happened here.
- **GPCC Noticeboard** – Covered below.

4. Notice of Matters Arising -

None

5. Reports (External) – Cllr Burgess updated:

- Budget setting at council taking place 20th February. Labour likely to take amendments to the budgets from Lib Dems and Conservatives – expected

that Labour will accept those amendments. Council officers produce a budget comparator, to see the differences between the parties. Cllr Burgess to circulate. Labour proposing an 8% increase in Council Tax. Council needs to cut £30million from the budget this year – very difficult to find these funds. More than half the budget is education – high staff costs. Greens have pressed for 10% - to invest in Council housing. Proposed education cuts not likely to go ahead due to Councillor interventions.

- Sue commented about impact of changes in private schools, if all those children were educated in the state system what would the cost be? Cllr Burgess, explained that the decision by the Labour government at Westminster to remove VAT relief from private schools has raised questions about the numbers that would join state schools. Council analysis shows that they are expecting 1500 coming from the private sector. Sue also commented that Council Tax is a regressive tax.

6. Reports of Interest Groups -

a. Planning -

- Electrical cabling coming through the Grange – looks to be unavoidable. Cllr Pogson has shared maps of the works. To be published on the GPCC website.

b. Licensing – Application for license extension to include children, Grey Horse Dalkeith Road has been shared. No comments.

c. Roads/Transport – update from Alan via email included:

- **Cameron Toll** - Work started on Monday, January 13 and continue until Friday, April 11, 2025. In order for the work to be delivered safely, there will be night-time single lane road closures at Cameron Toll roundabout and full closure from Tuesday 4th until Friday March 14th.
- **Pavement Parking** - More than 8,000 Edinburgh drivers have been fined in the last year for breaching parking enforcement rules designed to make pavements safer and more accessible to the public.
- Figures released by the council show that in the first year of the ban 8,394 penalty charge notices (PCN) were issued to drivers flouting the rules. As at the end of January, 5,153 fines were issued for footway parking, 1,612 for dropped kerb parking and 1,629 for double parking.
- **Potholes** - Figures show that nearly 31,000 potholes were reported to the council in the past financial year, making Edinburgh the “pothole capital” of Scotland. The council claimed to have repaired 22,000 square metres of pothole-covered land, but figures still show that the city accounts for almost a quarter of all potholes reported in Scotland.
- **Electric Charging Points** -City of Edinburgh Council hopes to participate in and lead a collaborative contract anticipated to involve eight Scottish authorities to procure, manage and expand a public electric vehicle charging network across the South East and South West of Scotland. It is the preference of Transport Scotland that authorities, where possible, work collaboratively with a view to pooling funding and resources to avoid duplication of effort and provide more commercially attractive packages for charge point operators (CPOs) to tender for.

- **South Suburban Railway** - A plan to reopen the railway has been generally met with approval . The plan is for the railway to run from Portobello to Murrayfield where it will join the tram network and use a hybrid train which can operate on both types of rail. Put forward by Students from Heriot Watt – started a petition. Ken asked if this is something to bring to the attention of the community – for support or not.
- **South Clerk Street Road Works** - A collapsed sewer on South Clerk Street near the junction with East Preston Street requires a four set of temporary traffic lights to manage the traffic flow . Part of the footpath is also closed . This is expected to last a minimum of eight weeks .
- **Parking Prices** - The council are proposing to increase parking charges by 13% which increases parking in the city centre from £8.20 to £9 an hour with residential permits to increase by between 3% and 6% .
- **North Bridge** As part of ongoing refurbishment of North Bridge, there will be a northbound closure for six weeks from Monday 17 February.

d. Communications/Publicity - Paul updated

- Applied for planning application and excavation permit. Have now got planning approval. Can push forward with ordering noticeboard. Installation cost from a preferred council supplier. Have £1800 to spend on noticeboard. To get agreement – then can book installation.
- Facebook posts – promoting upcoming elections. Good sharing of posts.

e. Environment

- Ken raised an issue for Cllr Burgess – George IV bridge. Tourist bus sits in bus lane, diesel exhaust emissions from the vehicle is messy. Cllr Burgess has had constituents raise issues with this bus. As long as bus meets MOT requirements of the time it was built, it is legal. Can be fined for idling.

f. Newington Cemetery – Ellen updated:

- Still looking into clearing brambles and ivy to install new bench. May get some funding from the Old Edinburgh Club to restore a headstone next to the Findlayson grave.
- Event on Monday 28th April 2025 at Midday to mark the new headstone on Findlayson grave. Tony Harris former GPCC Chair is organising the event - he has authored a book on Findlayson. Would be good to have people show up. Will be some refreshments afterwards.

7. Reports from Office Bearers

a. Treasurer Report – Paul updated:

Bank balance is £8,754 made up as follows:

- GPCC Account Balance - £4,697
 - No new income.
 - £162 of expenditure (website)

- Newington Cemetery Balance - £4,057
 - No new income. £531 expenditure (memorial repair, expenses)
- b. Secretary.
 - Elections – permanent space on the Grange Association forum. At the moment a request to get involved. Reid memorial, Marchmont St Giles. Ken has attended the library, with little success. The banners have been up for two weeks. Council has spent money on A5 leaflets.
 - Have been asked by CEC to provide a risk assessment for GPCC meetings. Asked for suggestions of potential risks, discussed that these could include *evacuation procedure in case of fires. Interaction with members of public etc.*
 - Civic Reception to Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Community Councils - Monday 24th February – Stanley to attend.

8. Reports from external groups

- EACC – Meeting on 20th February. Commented that not many CCs are in a strong position. Wouldn't be surprised to see if some fail. What is our Plan B if don't have eight Community Councillors – the CC will fall. What to do in those circumstances? Ken raised the consultation by the Council on Community Engagement – on what is needed for groups to do better, in terms of communications and web kit. Encourage people to respond.
- Douglas Rodgers from Marchmont/Sciennes – brought up a masterplan for net zero in tenements. Looking for some help with this work.
- Sue commented that newsletters are helpful and can spread the message.

9. Open Forum

Sue raised that John Palmer former Chair of GPCC passed away a couple of weeks ago.

10. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 19 March 2025.

AAction list

3 Actions ii)	Planning vacancy	Continued for updates
	Newington Cemetery wall	Continued for updates
5.	Budget comparator to be circulated by Cllr Burgess.	
8.	Circulate information about the Community Engagement consultation.	

